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ABSTRACT

School boards cannot account to the public unless they measure and assess the performance of school administrators and teachers. From the board's viewpoint, accountability (and therefore evaluation) must concentrate on the school superintendent. This evaluation must be carried out in an atmosphere of commitment and mutual trust, the procedures and the criteria to be used must be specifically agreed upon by the board, and a job description should be drafted. One of the most effective approaches to administrator evaluation could be effected through management by objectives (MBO). MBO removes the formal focus from the individual personality and places it on job results. Under MBO, the board and the superintendent agree on manageable and attainable objectives that are aimed at the achievement of overall goals. School districts that have experimented with MBO have found that it increases control through clarification of purpose and that it provides effective performance evaluation strategies. (JF)

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SEMINAR ENTITLED:

EVALUATING THE SUPERINTENDENT

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GLEANINGS FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR

by Joseph P. Lamb

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"ACCOUNTABILITY" IS A WORD WE'VE BEEN HEARING PRETTY OFTEN OF LATE, BUT IT ISN'T QUITE THE SAME KIND OF CLICHE OR FAD WORD AS "RELEVANCY", "DISADVANTAGED", OR SOME OF THE OTHERS WHICH HAVE BEEN OVER-USED AND MISUSED IN EDUCATIONAL CIRCLES IN RECENT YEARS. IT'S A WORD THAT SIGNIFIES A RISING SWELL OF DEMAND FROM THE PUBLIC THAT THE SCHOOLS SHOW RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THEIR CHILDREN AND TO THEIR MONEY. THE PRESSURE, WHILE OFTEN VERBALIZED IN GENERAL OR VAGUE TERMS, IS BUILDING UP ON US AS LOCAL BOARD MEMBERS - AND IS GOING TO COME UP MORE AND MORE IN LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS - AND GUESS WHERE IT IS GOING TO END UP? THAT'S RIGHT - INSIDE THAT OFFICE MARKED "SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS."

THIS SWELL IS NOT LIKELY TO SUBSIDE. TO THE CONTRARY, AS THE COST OF RUNNING THE SCHOOLS CONTINUES TO SPIRAL, AS URBANISM SPREADS, AS THE ASPIRATIONS OF MINORITY PEOPLES CONTINUE TO RISE, AS THE REPORTS OF CHILDREN LEAVING SCHOOL WITHOUT BASIC SKILLS CONTINUE TO GROW IN NUMBER, THE DEMANDS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY WILL INCREASE. WE CAN EXPECT,

FROM AN INCREASINGLY CONCERNED AND AN INCREASINGLY SOPHISTICATED PUBLIC, GREATER DEMAND FOR EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTIVITY, MORE SCRUTINY, MORE CRITICISM, AND LESS PATIENCE WITH EITHER THE REAL OR PERCEIVED SHORTCOMINGS OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS - AND IT WILL ALL ZERO IN ON ME, THE BOARD MEMBER, AND PASS RIGHT ALONG ON TO YOU, THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR.

THIS CONCERN IS ALREADY LEADING TO TRENDS AND MOVEMENTS WHICH MANY EDUCATORS BELIEVE WILL WEAKEN PUBLIC EDUCATION. I'M THINKING OF PROGRAMS LIKE PERFORMANCE CONTRACTING, UNDER WHICH, RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEARNING IS TURNED OVER TO PRIVATE, PROFIT-MAKING COMPANIES; AND I'M THINKING OF EDUCATIONAL VOUCHERS, WHICH WOULD GIVE PARENTS PUBLIC MONIES TO PAY THEIR CHILDREN'S TUITION IN THE PRIVATE OR PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF THEIR CHOICE. FROM ANOTHER POINT OF VIEW, SOME OF THESE IDEAS MAY HAVE SOME POTENTIAL FOR SHARPENING PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS, BUT THEY CERTAINLY WILL NOT PROVIDE A PANACEA, EVEN IN THEIR MAXIMUM POTENTIAL IS REALIZED. EITHER WAY, IF THE PUBLIC

SCHOOLS DON'T SATISFY THE PUBLIC'S DEMAND FOR ACCOUNTABILITY, THEY MAY CEASE TO EXIST AS WE NOW KNOW THEM. PUBLIC EDUCATION HAS TO ACCOUNT TO THE PUBLIC, AND THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING A SYSTEM OF ACCOUNTABILITY RESTS SQUARELY UPON THE SHOULDERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION. I WONDER HOW MANY BOARDS REALIZE THIS FACT, AND ARE TRYING TO FIND WAYS AND ANSWERS TO THE PROBLEM. I FEAR NOT TOO MANY.

THIS LEADS ME DIRECTLY TO THE NEXT RELATED POINT, WHICH IS "EVALUATION". WE CAN'T ACCOUNT FOR WHAT WE ARE DOING UNTIL AND UNLESS WE MEASURE AND ASSESS - UNLESS WE CONTINUALLY TAKE A REALLY HARD LOOK AT WHAT WE ARE DOING.

EVALUATION MUST, OF COURSE, INCLUDE EVERYONE IN EDUCATION, STARTING WITH THE BOARD ITSELF AND PROCEEDING THROUGH THE HIERARCHY OF CHIEF SCHOOL OFFICER, ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF, PROFESSIONAL STAFF, AND NON-CERTIFICATED EMPLOYEES. THEORETICALLY, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, THIS HAS BEEN GOING ON.

BUT AS FAR AS THE BOARD OF EDUCATION IS CONCERNED, ACCOUNTABILITY - AND THEREFORE EVALUATION - MUST CONCENTRATE ON THE DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT. JUST AS IN OTHER BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS, EDUCATION MUST OPERATE UNDER THE PRINCIPLE OF SINGLE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE TOP OFFICER. FURTHERMORE, THE SUPERINTENDENT IS UNIQUELY THE BOARD'S MAN (AND I GUESS I'D BETTER ADD "OR WOMAN"), THE PERSON SELECTED BY THE BOARD ITSELF BECAUSE HIS PHILOSOPHY AND VIEWS ARE SUPPOSEDLY COMPATIBLE WITH THEIR OWN; THE ONE PERSON DIRECTLY ANSWERABLE TO THE BOARD FOR THE OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM. EVALUATION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT HAS, IN FACT, ALWAYS BEEN A MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY OF SCHOOL BOARDS - AND, AGAIN, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, THIS HAS BEEN TAKING PLACE.

AND EVALUATION IS GOOD FOR BOTH BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT. AS FAR AS THE BOARD IS CONCERNED, IT HELPS TO ENSURE THAT THE BOARD'S POLICY DECISIONS FOR ITS EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM ARE CARRIED OUT. IT CAN IDENTIFY PROBLEM AREAS IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM. IT CAN DETERMINE COMPLIANCE WITH STATE LAWS AND REGULATIONS. A PROPERLY CONDUCTED EVALUATION PROVIDES AN ESTABLISHED SET OF QUALIFICATIONS AND CRITERIA FOR THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR, REGARDLESS OF WHO OCCUPIES THE POSITION.

FORMAL RECORDS PREPARED FOR THE PROCESS OF EVALUATION CAN SERVE AS PROTECTION FOR THE BOARD BY SERVING AS A BASIS FOR DISMISSAL OR WITHHOLDING OF INCREMENTS, OR AS A LEGAL BASIS FOR REMOVAL. THEY PUT THE BOARD IN A BETTER POSITION TO COPE WITH CRITICISM OR POTENTIAL POLITICAL INTERFERENCE. EVALUATION OF THE CHIEF SCHOOL OFFICER MAKES IT EASIER TO INSTITUTE SCHEDULED PERIODIC EVALUATION AT OTHER STAFF LEVELS.

THE BOARD ALSO LEARNS FROM A THOUGHTFUL EVALUATIVE PROCESS. BOARD MEMBERS BECOME MORE KNOWLEDGEABLE THROUGH THE INFORMATION THEY MUST RECEIVE AND PROCESS, MORE THOUGHTFUL, MORE INCLINED TO ATTACK COMPLICATED PROBLEMS BEFORE THEY REACH CRISIS PROPORTIONS. THEY FIND THEMSELVES ASKING THE QUESTIONS THAT ORDINARILY EMANATE FROM OTHERS AND WHICH THEY ARE OFTEN UNABLE TO ANSWER ADEQUATELY. EVALUATION ENCOURAGES SYSTEMATIC PLANNING AND, IN TURN, THE SETTING OF PRIORITIES. A BOARD OF EDUCATION WHICH CAN POINT TO ITS GOALS, PROGRAM AND PLANS, IS ITSELF DEMONSTRATING ACCOUNTABILITY.

DESPITE ALL THIS, EVALUATION IS THE RESPONSIBILITY WHICH WE BOARD MEMBERS TEND TO HANDLE LEAST WELL. IT'S HARD WORK - AND IT CERTAINLY DOESN'T ADD TO OUR POPULARITY. IT'S VERY TIME-CONSUMING - AND TIME IS SOMETHING WE TEND TO BE SHORT OF. OUTSIDE EVALUATION COSTS MONEY - AND OUR BUDGETS SELDOM PROVIDE ANY LEEWAY FOR EXPENDITURES OF THIS KIND.

AND PERHAPS WORST OF ALL, HOW MANY SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS HAVE THE UNDERSTANDING OR EXPERIENCE TO REALLY PROPERLY CONDUCT A PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL? EXPERIENCED BUSINESS MEN - DEPARTMENT HEADS AND MANAGERS - GET UP-TIGHT ABOUT THE IDEA - BOTH AS "APPRAISERS" AND "APPRAISEES" - EVEN WHEN THEY HAVE SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW. THE INTRODUCTION OF AN APPRAISAL OR EVALUATION PROGRAM WHERE NONE FORMALLY EXISTED BEFORE, CAN BE A VERY TRAUMATIC, DIFFICULT AND TIME-CONUSMING TASK, EVEN WITH EXPERIENCED PERSONNEL PROFESSIONALS HEADING IT UP.

ADDING TO OUR RELUCTANCE IN THE SCHOOL SECTOR IS THE FACT THAT SUPERINTENDENTS, TOO, SHY AWAY FROM EVALUATION. LIKE MOST PEOPLE, THEY DON'T LIKE COMPARISONS, FIRST OF ALL. THEY FEEL, WITH SOME JUSTIFICATION, THAT BECAUSE OF THE DIFFERENCES IN DISTRICT RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT, IT IS DIFFICULT TO MEASURE THE SUPERINTENDENT'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE OPERATION OF THE DISTRICT. AS DONALD J. McCARTY POINTS OUT IN <u>SCHOOL MANAGEMENT</u>, "THE ROLE BEHAVIOR OF THE SCHOOL

SUPERINTENDENT IS UNIQUELY HIS OWN AND DIFFICULT TO CATALOGUE OR ANALYZE SATISFACTORILY". SUPERINTENDENTS ALSO CLAIM THAT THE ART OF EVALUATION IS STILL RATHER PRIMITIVE - THAT PROCEDURES HAVE NOT BEEN SOLIDLY ESTABLISHED, THAT CRITERIA ARE NOT PREDETERMINED OR EXPLICIT. THIS IS MY MAJOR WORRY IN THIS AREA - HOW DO AS MANY AS NINE DISPARATE BOARD MEMBERS, MOSTLY UNTUTORED IN THIS AREA, PERFORM THIS FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY AND CONSTRUCTIVELY?

ALSO, THE PURPOSE OF EVALUATION IS PERCEIVED DIFFERENTLY BY ADMINISTRATORS AND BOARDS. LILA CAROL, A FELLOW OF THE NATIONAL PROGRAM FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP, WHO RECENTLY COMPLETED A STUDY OF EVALUATION PROCEDURES FOR CHIEF SCHOOL OFFICERS IN NEW JERSEY, FOUND THAT WHEREAS MOST BOARD PRESIDENTS SAW EVALUATION AS A MEANS OF HELPING THE SUPERINTENDENTS ESTABLISH "RELEVANT PERFORMANCE GOALS", A LARGE MAJORITY OF THE SUPERINTENDENTS FELT THAT EVALUATION WAS USED MORE FOR THE PURPOSE OF "JUDGING", OR FOR DETERMINING SALARY. SEVERAL THOUGHT THAT EVALUATION WAS BEING USED TO BUILD A CASE FOR THEIR DISMISSAL.

APPARENTLY WE MUST BEGIN EVALUATION BY REASSURING OUR CHIEF ADMINISTRATORS THAT EVALUATION IS ALSO GOOD FOR THEM - THAT IT IS A TOOL FOR HELPING THEM PERFORM THEIR JOBS EFFECTIVELY RATHER THAN A WEAPON TO BE USED AGAINST THEM. BUT WE SHOULD NOT KID OURSELVES OR OUR SUPERINTENDENTS - IT'S GOING TO HAVE A MEANINGFUL EFFECT ON THEIR POCKET BOOKS - NOT NECESSARILY NEGATIVELY - AND EVEN THOUGH EVALUATION MAY NOT THEORETICALLY BE INTENDED TO DO SO, I CANNOT SEE A GROUP LIKE A SCHOOL BOARD NOT GIVING THEIR EVALUATIVE DECISION MAJOR CONSIDERATION AT SALARY - BUDGET - TIME.

EVEN SO, AS MRS. CAROL POINTS OUT, FORMAL EVALUATION WHICH CULMINATES IN A WRITTEN DOCUMENT IS A VALUABLE ASSET IN THE SUPERINTENDENT'S FILE AND, IF IT REVEALS A RECORD OF SUCCESSFUL PERFORMANCE, CAN SERVE AS A VALUABLE REFERENCE FOR FUTURE EMPLOYMENT. IF A SUPERINTENDENT HAS RECEIVED FAVORABLE EVALUATIONS OVER A PERIOD OF TIME, HE IS LESS LIKELY TO FIND HIS POSITION THREATENED BY ONE CRISIS OR ONE LESS-THAN-SATISFACTORY SITUATION. A FORMAL EVALUATION LETS THE SUPERINTENDENT KNOW WHERE HE STANDS - IT REMOVES THE ELEMENT OF UNCERTAINTY. GOALS WILL HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AND TANGIBLE EVIDENCE SUPPLIED TO HIM OF THE BOARD'S JUDGMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS.

OBVIOUSLY, I BELIEVE THAT EVALUATION CAN BE A VALUABLE AND REWARDING EXPERIENCE FOR BOTH SUPERINTENDENT AND BOARD. BUT I DO HAVE SOME CAVEATS: FIRST, EVALUATION MUST BE CARRIED OUT IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF COMMITMENT AND MUTUAL TRUST - IN AN UNTHREATENING ATMOSPHERE. SECOND, I FEEL THAT THE PROCEDURES AND THE CRITERIA TO BE USED MUST BE SPECIFICALLY ENUNCIATED, FULLY DISCUSSED, AND AGREED UPON BY THE ENTIRE BOARD - A VERY BIG JOB. THEY SHOULD ALSO BE MADE KNOWN TO THE SUPERINTENDENT IN ADVANCE; IN FACT, THEY SHOULD EVEN BE FORMULATED IN CONSULTATION WITH HIM. THIRD, ALTHOUGH THE PROCESS OF FORMALIZING PROCEDURES IS COMPLICATED AND TIME-CONSUMING, I URGE THAT FORMAL PROCEDURES BE ADOPTED. IN THE SURVEY I MENTIONED PREVIOUSLY - THE ONE CONDUCTED BY MRS. CAROL - RESPONDENTS (BOTH BOARD PRESIDENTS AND SUPERINTENDENTS) AGREED ALMOST UNANIMOUSLY THAT ALL THE DETRIMENTAL FEATURES OF EVALUATION INHERE IN INFORMAL, RATHER THAN FORMAL EVALUATIVE METHODS .

FINALLY, DESIGN YOUR APPRAISAL PLAN. HERE I HAVE SOME SUGGESTIONS FROM DR.DEAN SPEICHER, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF THE HIGHLAND, INDIANA, SCHOOLS.

1. START BY REVIEWING THE RESEARCH AND LITERATURE RELATED TO ADMINISTRATIVE EVALUATION.
2. INVOLVE OTHER ADMINISTRATORS IN THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR APPRAISAL SYSTEM.
3. REVIEW PLANS USED BY OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS.
4. DEVELOP GOALS OR OBJECTIVES FOR DEFINING THE DESIRED PROGRAM OUTCOMES.
5. IDENTIFY AND SPELL OUT THE INDICATORS OF ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS.
6. DECIDE HOW DATA WILL BE COLLECTED. NAME THE EVALUATION STAFF AND CONSTRUCT A TIME SCHEDULE.

I WOULD ADD A VERY FUNDAMENTAL SUGGESTION OF MY OWN - DETERMINE JUST WHAT IS THE JOB OF THE PERSON YOU ARE EVALUATING. WE HAVE RECENTLY IMPLEMENTED A SOMEWHAT UNUSUAL PROGRAM WHICH BEGINS BY THE EMPLOYEE - RIGHT UP THROUGH VICE-PRESIDENTS - PREPARING HIS JOB DESCRIPTION, AS HE SEES IT - WHAT ARE HIS RESPONSIBILITIES, WHAT ARE HIS LEVELS OF AUTHORITY. SUPERVISORS HAVE BEEN AMAZED AT SOME OF THE DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS THEIR PEOPLE HAVE OF THEIR JOBS, THAN DO THE SUPERVISORS.

SO WE, AS BOARD MEMBERS, AND YOU AS SUPERINTENDENTS, NO MATTER WHAT TYPE OF APPROACH WE MAY USE TO ASSESSMENT, HAD BETTER AT LEAST BE STARTING FROM THE SAME POINT. EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE LAWS, STATE REGULATIONS, AND LOCAL POLICIES SPEAKING TO THE SUPERINTENDENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES AND AUTHORITY, YOU MAY BE SURPRISED - EVEN SHOCKED - AT POSSIBLE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION ON WHAT YOUR JOB IS OR SHOULD BE.

SPEICHER ALSO POINTS OUT THE FOLLOWING DIFFERING APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENT OF AN ADMINISTRATOR EVALUATION PLAN.

(1) THE CHARACTERISTICS APPROACH - THIS ASSUMES THAT ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS CAN BE DETERMINED BY AN EVALUATION OR ASSESSMENT OF PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES CONSIDERED NECESSARY OR DESIRABLE - SUCH AS KNOWLEDGE, PERSONALITY, APPEARANCE, ETC. UNFORTUNATELY, THIS IS PROBABLY THE MOST COMMON APPROACH USED, BOTH IN THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS.

(2) THE PROCESS-BEHAVIOR APPROACH - WHICH ASSUMES THAT ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS CAN BE DETERMINED BY AN EVALUATION OR ASSESSMENT OF SPECIFIC FUNCTIONS WHICH ARE CONSIDERED ESSENTIAL TO THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF EDUCATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE OUTCOMES - I.E., PERFORMANCE OF MANAGERIAL, COMMUNICATIONS, BUDGETING SKILLS, ETC.

(3) ADMINISTRATIVE OUTCOMES - THIS ASSUMES THAT EFFECTIVENESS CAN BE DETERMINED BY ASSESSING OR MEASURING RELATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF EDUCATIONAL AND/OR ADMINISTRATIVE OBJECTIVES. THE OUTCOME MODEL REQUIRES THE DEVELOPMENT OF OBJECTIVES, WHICH INCORPORATE MEASURABLE OR OBSERVABLE CRITERIA.

BASED ON MY EXPERIENCE AS BOTH A CORPORATION EXECUTIVE (AND, AS INDICATED, MY SPECIAL FIELD HAPPENS TO BE PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION) AND AS A BOARD MEMBER, I STRONGLY SUPPORT AN APPROPRIATE FORM OF APPROACH NO.3 - OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM AND EVALUATION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT ON THE BASIS OF RESULTS.

I SAY THIS RECOGNIZING FULL WELL THE SHORTCOMINGS OF THIS SYSTEM. FIRST OF ALL, MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES IS ESSENTIALLY A MANAGEMENT CONTROL SYSTEM, NOT AN EVALUATION SYSTEM. HOWEVER, I THINK WE ALL RECOGNIZE THAT, UNFORTUNATE AS IT MAY BE, MOST EVALUATION IS REALLY DONE ON THE BASIS OF FEELING AND ON PERSONAL LIKES AND DISLIKES - THE PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED CHARACTERISTICS APPROACH. MOST FORMAL SYSTEMS ARE SET UP TO JUSTIFY THOSE PERSONAL FEELINGS OF THE EVALUATORS. MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVE (M.B.O.) DOES HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF TAKING THE FORMAL FOCUS OFF INDIVIDUAL PERSONALITY AND PLACING IT ON THE "WHY" OF EVALUATION - JOB RESULTS. WHILE THIS WILL NOT HAPPEN IN A VACUUM, I THINK IT MAY HELP OFFSET THE VAGARIES PRODUCED BY NINE DISPARATE (AND CHANGING) PERSONS SITTING ON A BOARD. IT SHOULD ALSO PROVIDE SOME CONTINUITY AND KEEP THE DISTRICT MORE GOAL ORIENTED. POSSIBLY THE MOST IMPORTANT RESULT OF ALL IS SIMPLY THE SCHEDULED AND PERIODIC STOPPING AND REASSESSING OF WHERE THE SYSTEM IS AT AND WHERE IT IS GOING. AS A "PUBLIC CONTACT" EXECUTIVE, THE SUPERINTENDENT CANNOT ESCAPE SOME MEASUREMENT VIA THE "CHARACTERISTICS APPROACH", BUT THE LESS, THE BETTER.

UNDER MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES, THE BOARD AND THE SUPERINTENDENT AGREE ON MANAGEABLE, ATTAINABLE OBJECTIVES, AIMED AT THE ACHIEVEMENT OF OVERALL GOALS. FOR EXAMPLE: (1) READING SCORES OF X NUMBERS OF CHILDREN WILL BE RAISED TO THE LEVEL OF MINIMUM COMPETENCY BY THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR. (2) IN-SERVICE EDUCATION, EMPHASIZING HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS, WILL BE PROVIDED FOR THE SCHOOL DISTRICT'S PROFESSIONAL STAFF. (3) A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR INDIVIDUALIZING EDUCATION FOR PUPILS FROM K-12 WILL HAVE BEEN FORMULATED BY THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR.

CONTRAST EVALUATION ON THIS BASIS TO EVALUATION ON THE BASIS OF THE CRITERIA MOST OFTEN USED - ON PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS, QUALITIES, AND SKILLS SUCH AS, "CHARACTER", "GUTS", "SOUND JUDGMENT", "DECISION-MAKING ABILITY", OR EVEN, GOOD STAFF AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS, SOUND PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION, ABILITY TO PLAN AHEAD, SELF-CONFIDENCE, IDEALISM, ETC. GRANTED, THESE ARE ALL HIGHLY DESIRABLE ATTRIBUTES, BUT HOW DOES ONE RENDER A VALID JUDGMENT ON SOME OF THESE SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA? OR TAKE THE WORK "EFFECTIVENESS". JUST EXACTLY WHAT DOES THE WORD MEAN - WHAT DOES IT ENCOMPASS - HOW DOES ONE MEASURE IT?

THE IDEA OF MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES CERTAINLY ISN'T NEW; IT JUST HASN'T BEEN USED VERY FREQUENTLY IN THE EVALUATION OF SUPERINTENDENTS. AMONG THE FEW DISTRICTS WHICH HAVE INCORPORATED IT IS THE CALDWELL-WEST CALDWELL, NEW JERSEY DISTRICT, WHICH INTRODUCED THE IDEA FORMALLY AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 1970 SCHOOL YEAR. AS DESCRIBED BY THE DISTRICT, THE AIM OF MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES IS THE SAME AS THE MAJOR PURPOSE OF THE DISTRICT ITSELF - BETTER EDUCATION FOR EVERY CHILD IN THE DISTRICT THROUGH IMPROVEMENT OF INSTRUCTION IN EACH INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL AND IN THE SYSTEM AS A WHOLE. THIS INCLUDES IMPROVEMENT IN CURRICULUM, DEVELOPMENT OF NEW TECHNIQUES AND PROCESSES OF INSTRUCTION, SELF-IMPROVEMENT OF INDIVIDUAL PERSONS OR FACULTY, AND CREATION OF A BETTER CLIMATE OF UNDERSTANDING THROUGH BETTER COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS, STUDENTS, STAFF AND PUBLIC.

THE DISTRICT FINDS THAT MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES OFFERS A GUIDE FOR PLANNING. IT PROVIDES FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT CONTROL, IT INCREASES CONTROL THROUGH CLARIFICATION OF PURPOSE, IT PROVIDES EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION STRATEGIES. THE SUPERINTENDENT KNOWS EXACTLY WHAT THE GOALS ARE, AND WHAT HIS RESPONSIBILITIES ARE IN ATTAINING THOSE GOALS. JUST LIKE THE DIRECTOR OF A LARGE CORPORATION, THE SUPERINTENDENT, AS DIRECTOR OF ONE OF THE COMMUNITY'S LARGEST ENTERPRISES, KNOWS EXACTLY WHAT HE HAS TO ACCOMPLISH WITHIN A STATED PERIOD. HE KNOWS WHERE HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE HEADING AND HE CAN BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE IF HE DOESN'T GET THERE. THERE MAY NOT BE AN EASY-TO-READ "BOTTOM-LINE" PROFIT NUMBER, BUT THERE WILL BE A NUMBER OF SORTS, RATHER THAN A GROUP OPINION.

THE CALDWELL-WEST CALDWELL BOARD BEGAN BY ANNOUNCING ITS OBJECTIVES FOR THE YEAR - ABOUT 18 IN NUMBER. SUBSEQUENTLY, EACH ADMINISTRATOR IN THE DISTRICT, INCLUDING THE SUPERINTENDENT, WAS REQUIRED TO GO THROUGH THE PROCESS OF IDENTIFYING SPECIFIC PRIORITIES, PURPOSES, AND ACTIONS WHICH WOULD ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES. THUS, IN ADDITION TO GUIDING THE SUPERINTENDENT, THE PROCESS ALSO HELPS TO DEVELOP MANAGERIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE TALENT IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM BY ALLOWING SUBORDINATES TO TAKE INITIATIVE AND DEMONSTRATE CREATIVITY.

BUT REGARDLESS OF THE SYSTEM OF EVALUATION, THERE ARE ALWAYS THREE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED BEFORE THE PROCESS IS BEGUN: ON WHAT BASIS DOES THE BOARD JUDGE THE QUALITY OF THE PERFORMANCE OF ITS CHIEF SCHOOL OFFICER? HOW DOES IT GET THE INFORMATION NEEDED FOR EVALUATION? HOW CAN THE BOARD IMPROVE ITS METHODS OF GATHERING INFORMATION AND OF MAKING AN ASSESSMENT?

AND THERE ARE SEVERAL FUNDAMENTAL TENETS TO BE REMEMBERED:

(1) THE GOALS OF APPRAISAL MUST BE IMPROVEMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE PERFORMANCE.

(2) APPRAISAL MUST BE CONDUCTED IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF MUTUAL RESPECT. WITH RESPECT, YOU CAN HAVE A FRANK, NO-HOLDS-BARRED EVALUATION SESSION AND CLEAR THE AIR. AGAIN, I'M HESITANT ABOUT HOW YOU CAN ACCOMPLISH THIS WITH THE WHOLE BOARD INVOLVED, ESPECIALLY IN THE COMMUNICATION OF EVALUATION PROCESS.

(3) ANY LIST OF QUALIFICATIONS SHOULD TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL SYSTEM. IF YOU BORROW A LIST FOR REFERENCE, MAKE SURE YOU MODIFY AND PERSONALIZE IT TO SUIT YOUR DISTRICT.

FINALLY, I KNOW THAT ALL OF US ON BOARDS MUST REMEMBER THAT A GOOD SUPERINTENDENT IS HARD TO FIND AND JUST AS HARD - PERHAPS HARDER - TO KEEP. WE MUST REMEMBER THAT WE ASK A GREAT DEAL OF HIM. HE IS EXPECTED TO SERVE THE BEST EDUCATIONAL INTERESTS OF THE CHILDREN, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME SATISFYING THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAKE OF EDUCATION, THE DEMANDS OF SCHOOL STAFF, THE WISHES OF THE PUBLIC, AND THE RULES OF THE STATE. HE MUST BE WILLING TO TAKE RISKS, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME ACTING PRUDENTLY. HE MUST HAVE COURAGE TO MAKE DECISIONS ON THE BASIS OF WHAT IS RIGHT, RATHER THAN WHAT IS EXPEDIENT (ISN'T THAT HOW HARTUNGER LOST HIS JOB?). HE MUST PUT EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT BEFORE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, BUT STILL HAVE A RESPONSIBLE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE BUDGET. HE HAS TO BE AN ACCOUNTANT, A COMMUNICATOR, A PUBLIC RELATIONS MAN, A LEADER. NOT MANY OTHER POSITIONS REQUIRE SUCH DIVERSITY OF KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITY, OR DEMAND SUCH STATURE.

AND WHILE EVALUATING THE SUPERINTENDENT, I SUGGEST THAT WE BOARD MEMBERS TAKE A LOOK AT OURSELVES AND OUR WAYS. LET'S ASK OURSELVES: DO WE EXPRESS OUR APPRECIATION TO THE SUPERINTENDENT WHEN HE DESERVES IT? DO WE SEEK HIS ADVICE IN REGARD TO POLICY? DO WE REFRAIN FROM MEDDLING IN ADMINISTRATIVE DETAIL? (HERE I MUST INTERPOLATE THAT IN SOME CASES BOARDS HAVE TO BE CAREFUL NOT TO LET THE SUPERINTENDENT IMMERSE THEM IN "BUSY WORK", SO THAT THEY LOSE SIGHT OF THEIR POLICY-MAKING AND GOAL-SETTING FUNCTIONS.) DO WE WORK WITH THE SUPERINTENDENT TO ORIENT NEW BOARD MEMBERS? DO WE SUBMIT AN AGENDA TO HIM IN ADVANCE OF BOARD MEETINGS? DO WE PROVIDE HIM WITH A CLIMATE CONDUCIVE TO GOOD WORK? DO WE CONTINUALLY SEEK ADEQUATE RESOURCES TO SUPPORT A GOOD SCHOOL SYSTEM? DO WE REWARD HIM COMMENSURATELY WITH HIS DUTIES AND CALIBER OF PERFORMANCE?

SPEAKING OF REWARD, I QUESTION AND OPPOSE THE PRACTICE OF BASING ADMINISTRATIVE SALARIES ON A RATIO OF TEACHER SALARIES. THIS PRACTICE IS SEEN AS POSSIBLY CONTRIBUTING TO A CONFLICT OF INTEREST, SINCE ADMINISTRATORS MAY SEEK TO BOOST TEACHER SALARIES IN ORDER TO RAISE THEIR OWN. THERE IS NO PARALLEL FOR THIS KIND OF TIE-IN IN INDUSTRY, EXCEPT SOMETIMES INDIRECTLY AT THE FIRST-LINE SUPERVISORY LEVEL - FOREMEN. IN BUSINESS, SUPERVISORY SALARIES ARE INEVITABLY ADJUSTED WHEN GENERAL LABOR WINS AN INCREASE, BUT THE ADJUSTMENTS BEAR NO DIRECT PERCENTAGE LINK TO THE INCREASE IN GENERAL LABOR WAGES AND ARE USUALLY NOT COINCIDENTAL WITH SUCH HOURLY WAGE INCREASES. INSTEAD, INCREASES ARE BASED ON FACTORS SUCH AS PRODUCTIVITY, RESPONSIBILITY, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE JOB - AND MOST IMPORTANT, MEASURED JOB PERFORMANCE - RESULTS.

ADMINISTRATORS RESIST SEPARATION OF THEIR SALARIES FROM THOSE OF TEACHERS FOR VARIOUS REASONS. THEY NEED TO BE REASSURED THAT IF THE RATIO CONCEPT IS ABANDONED, THEIR SALARIES WILL BE SET ON SOME EQUITABLE BASIS. PERHAPS ADMINISTRATIVE COMPENSATION COULD BE BASED ON A PERCENTILE OF THE SALARIES PAID IN SIMILAR ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS IN A COUNTY, GEOGRAPHIC AREA, OR SAMPLING OF COMPARABLE DISTRICTS - AND NOT EXCLUSIVELY IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR. LONGEVITY IS DECREASING IN IMPORTANCE AS A FACTOR IN SALARIES.

FINALLY, THE EVALUATION COMPLETED, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH THE RESULTS? A SUPERINTENDENT WITH A VERY HIGH RATING MAY, OF COURSE, BE GIVEN ANOTHER CONTRACT, PERHAPS PERMANENT STATUS, OR A SUBSTANTIAL RAISE. A SUPERINTENDENT WITH ONLY A "SATISFACTORY" RATING MAY NEED A SESSION WITH THE BOARD TO DETERMINE HOW HE CAN IMPROVE HIS PERFORMANCE.

AN ADMINISTRATOR WITH AN UNSTATISFACTORY RATING NEED NOT BE FIRED. HE MAY BE EMINENTLY SALVAGEABLE. GOALS SHOULD BE REVIEWED WITH HIM AND THE BOARD MEMBERS SHOULD ASK THEMSELVES, HAVE THEY BEEN REALISTIC? HAVE THEY GIVEN HIM THE SUPPORT AND THE RESOURCES HE NEEDS TO ACCOMPLISH THOSE GOALS? OR ARE THERE COMMUNITY FACTORS AT PLAY WHICH HE CAN DO NOTHING ABOUT?

THE CHALLENGES TO TODAY'S EDUCATIONAL LEADERS - BOTH LAY AND PROFESSIONAL - ARE GREAT. THE PUBLIC'S EXPECTATIONS OF THE SCHOOLS ARE CONSTANTLY RISING. NO OTHER INSTITUTION HAS BEEN PRESENTED WITH THE DEMANDS LAID UPON EDUCATION. THE STRAIN MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO UNDERMINE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUPERINTENDENT AND BOARD. THE SUPERINTENDENT MUST REMEMBER THAT THE BOARD MEMBER IS AN ELECTED PUBLIC OFFICIAL WHO HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO, AND WHO MUST ANSWER TO, HIS CONSTITUENCY. THE BOARD MEMBER MUST REMEMBER THAT THE PROFESSIONAL VALUES HELD BY THE SUPERINTENDENT MAY NOT, AND NEED NOT, NECESSARILY HARMONIZE WITH HIS OWN PERSONAL BELIEFS AND VALUES. RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY MUST ALWAYS BE COMMENSURATE. AND READY AND CONTINUOUS

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE BOARD, WHICH REPRESENTS THE PUBLIC, AND THE SUPERINTENDENT WHO REPRESENTS BASIC PROFESSIONAL CONCERNS, IS AN INDISPENSIBLE REQUIREMENT FOR GOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT OPERATION.

AGAIN, THE KEY IS MUTUAL CONSIDERATION AND RESPECT. WE MUST ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER.

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